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(56) Documents Cited

GB 2206094 A GB 1265328 A

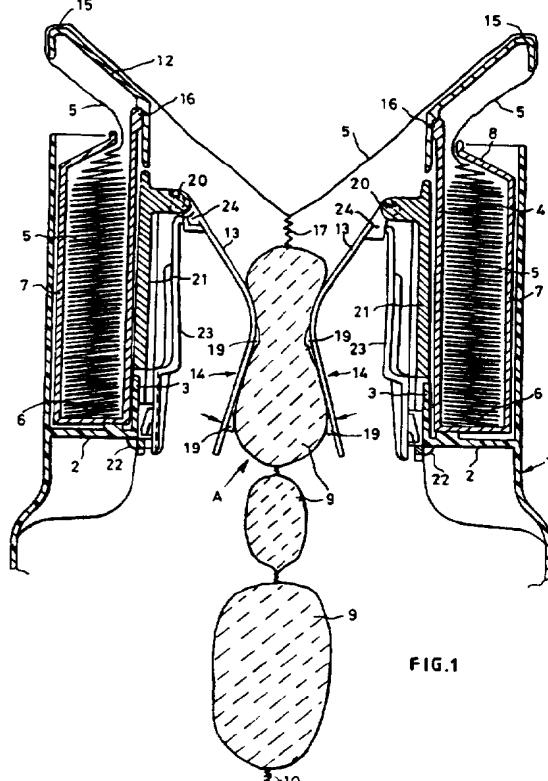
(58) Field of Search

UK CL (Edition M) A4A AE, B8C CW21
INT CL⁵ B65B 9/10 9/15 9/18, B65F 1/06

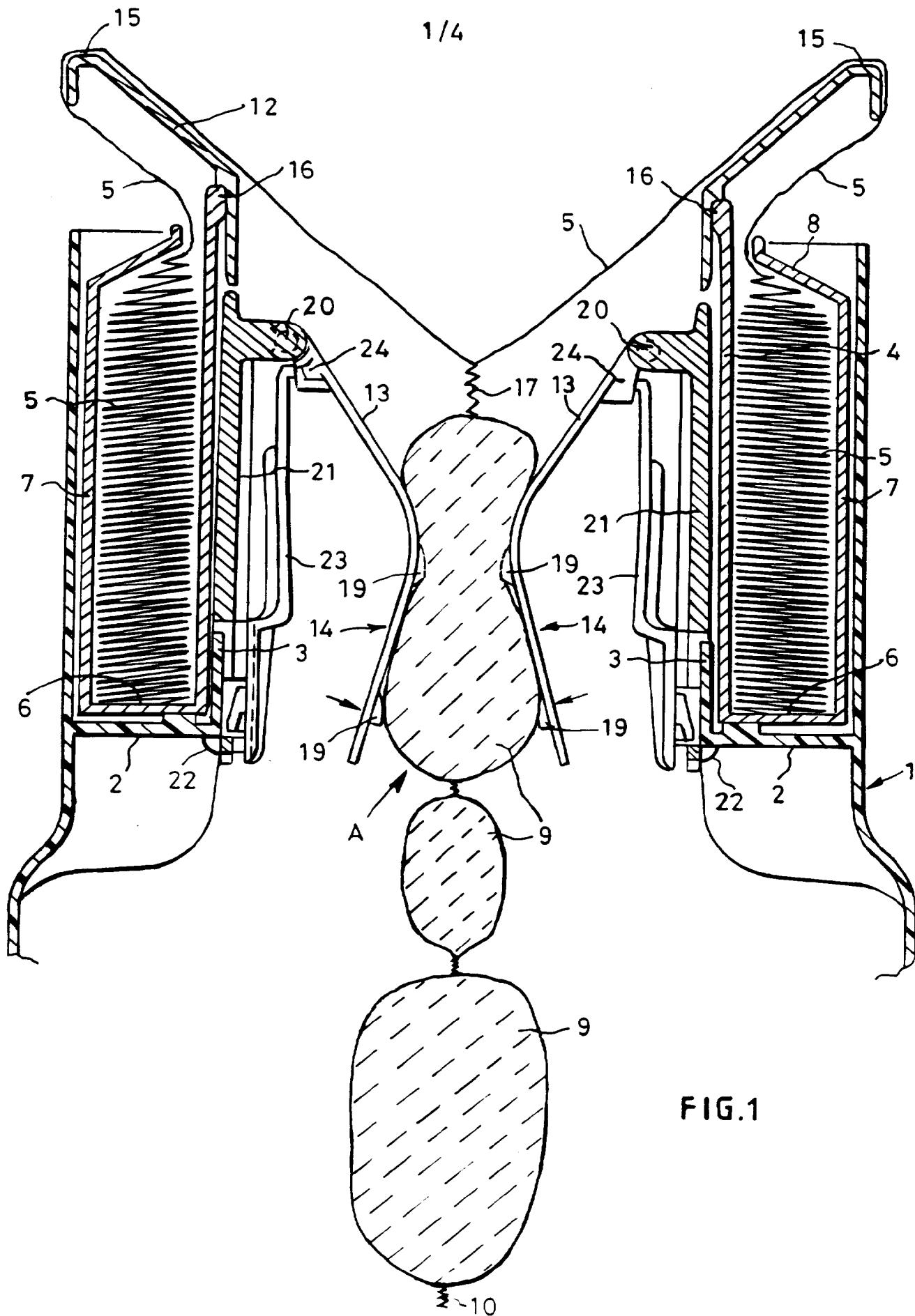
ONLINE DATABASES: WPI

(54) Packaging in flexible tubing;disposal of waste material

(57) A series of packages (9) containing different sized objects are formed by pushing the objects in series into a funnel shaped portion of flexible tubing (5) drawn from pack (4, 6, 7) over the rim (15) of a wide funnel (12). Each object pushes a preceding package from between spring-loaded jaws (14) to take its place, the jaws meeting to close the tubing thereat unless displaced by an object. Each package is closed at the top by twisting the tubing by turning the funnel fixed to the pack about its axis. The object may be personal waste material such as babies' disposable nappies, tampons or other sanitary towels.



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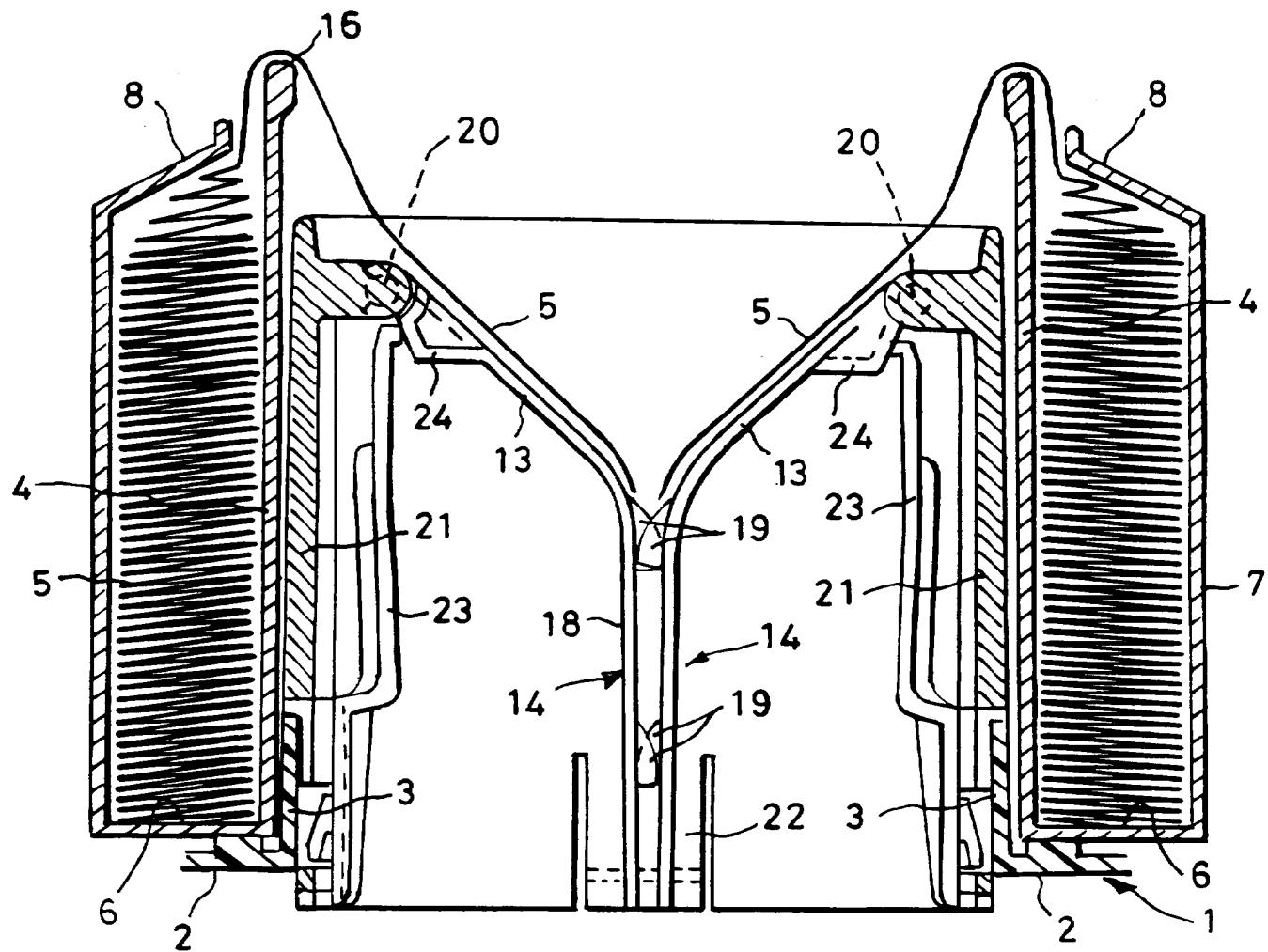


FIG. 2.

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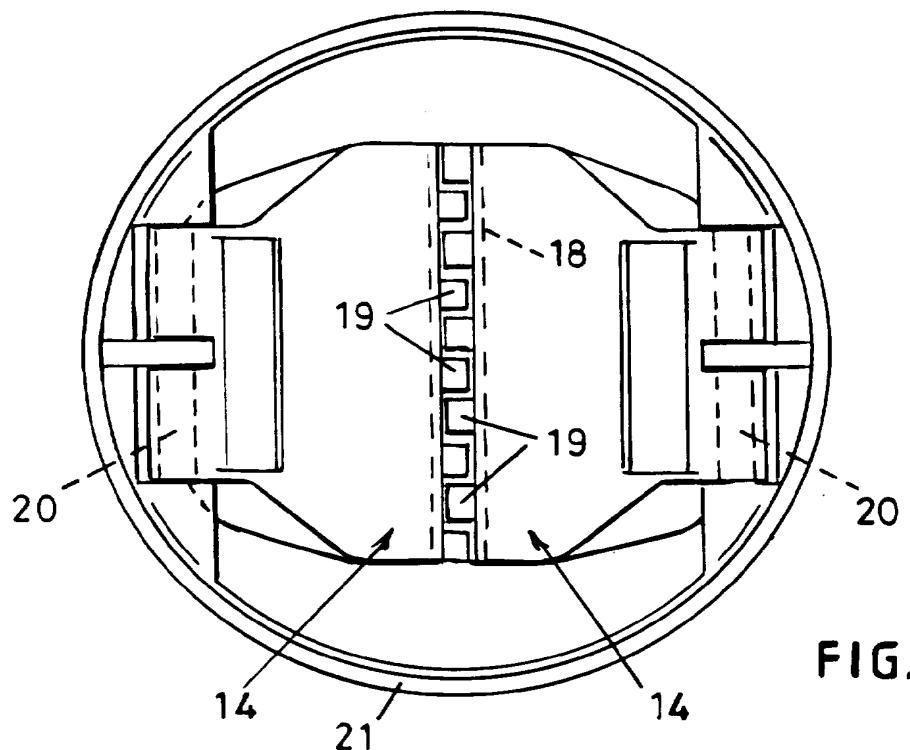


FIG. 3.

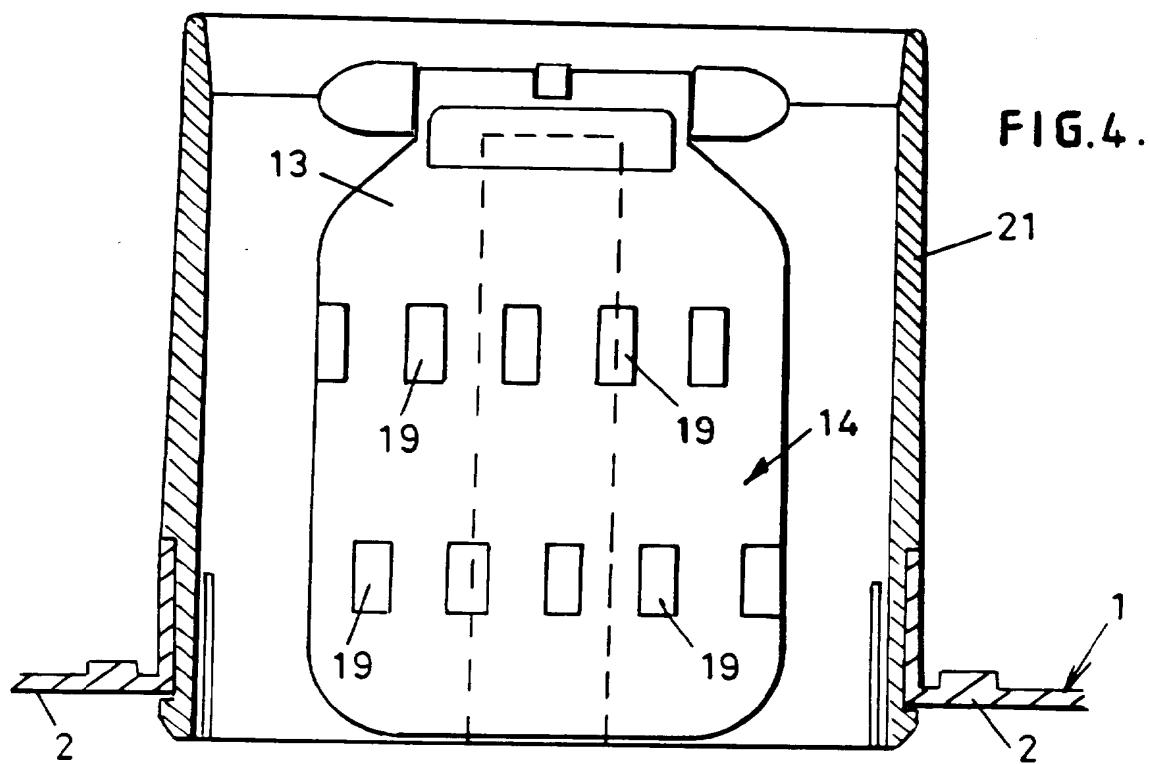
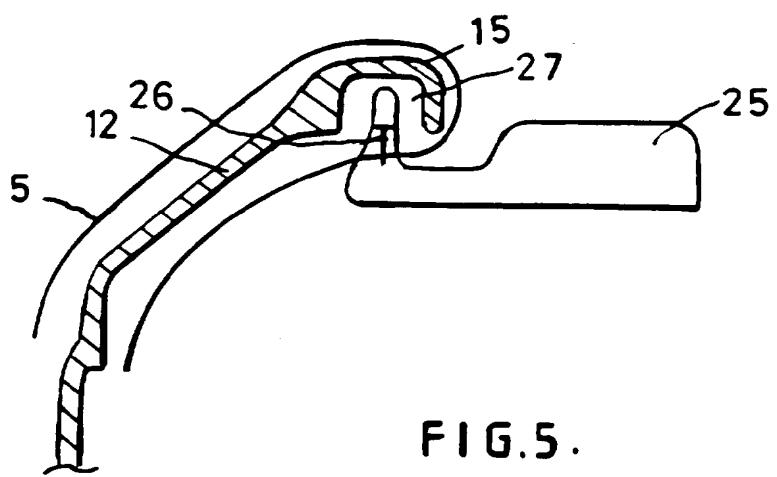


FIG. 4.

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APPARATUS FOR USING PACKS OF
FLEXIBLE TUBING IN PACKAGING

This invention relates to apparatus for using
packs of flexible tubing in packaging and more
5 particularly to packaging a series of objects
respectively in individual packages along a length of
such flexible tubing.

The invention is particularly applicable to the
disposal of waste material and a main object of the
10 invention is to provide for the ready disposal of
personal waste material such as babies' disposable
nappies, tampons or other sanitary towels.

In patent specification No. GB 2206094 there is
described apparatus for packaging a series of objects
15 respectively in individual packages distributed along an
unbroken length of flexible, substantially non-resilient
tubing providing the walls of the packages, the apparatus
comprising tubular guide means arranged to receive a pack
of said flexible tubing when formed into a gathered tube
20 and to enable one end of the tubing in the gathered pack
to be drawn away from the gathered pack and passed over
the end of the tubular guide means when the latter is
surrounded by the gathered pack and then coaxially
downwards through the tubular guide means so that the
25 outer surface of the flexible material in the pack
becomes the cylindrical inner surface of the flexible
material passing through the tubular guide means, the end
of the flexible tubing being initially open until sealed
to form the base of a first package having the flexible
30 tubing as its side wall, the apparatus being arranged for
the base to be thrust along the tubular guide means by
an object to be packaged, while further flexible tubing
is as a consequence drawn from the pack over the end of
the tubular guide means into the tubular guide means to
35 envelop the object to be packaged when located at least
partly in the tubular guide means, means beyond the

tubular guide means being provided for manually twisting the flexible tubing beyond an object when so located to close and thereby complete a package comprising that object and so provide the base for a further package for 5 a further object to be thrust into the tubular guide means, whereby objects can be packaged in series along the length of unbroken tubing and at least an element being arranged to co-operate with each object to be packaged to hold the enveloping tubing against axial 10 rotation during the said twisting.

The objects referred to above may be single objects or discrete collections of items, dry, damp or very wet.

One object of the present invention is to enable 15 an increased size range of the objects to be accommodated in a single length of flexible tubing, these being accepted by the apparatus continuously without adjustment.

According to one aspect of the present 20 invention, apparatus for packaging a series of objects distributed along a length of flexible, substantially non-resilient tubing providing the walls of the packages comprises tubular guide means arranged to receive a pack of said flexible tubing when formed into a gathered tube 25 located about the guide means to enable one end of the tubing in the gathered pack to be drawn away from an end of the gathered pack and then over an end of the tubular guide means and coaxially through the tubular guide means so that the outer surface of the flexible material in the 30 pack becomes the cylindrical inner surface of the flexible material passing through the tubular guide means, the said one end of the flexible tubing being sealed to form the base of a first package having the flexible tubing as its side wall, the apparatus being 35 furnished with resilient clamping means normally substantially closed but contrived to be opened by the

thrust of said closed end when containing the object in said closed end of said first package and thereupon to hold said package when the thrust thereon is relaxed, said thrust resulting in further flexible tubing being 5 drawn from the pack over the said end of the tubular guide means providing space for a further object if required, means being provided for manually twisting the flexible tubing beyond said first mentioned object to close said first package while being held against axial 10 rotation by said clamping means and said clamping means being further contrived for said first package to be thrust beyond and clear of said clamping means by thrust applied to said further object.

While the apparatus described above has proved 15 to be very satisfactory for ordinary family use, in the case of use by widely disassociated people, as in a hospital, it is necessary to reduce to the greatest possible extent any risk of cross infection. It is therefore a further object of the present invention to 20 achieve this.

According to a further aspect of the invention, apparatus for packaging a series of objects respectively in individual packages distributed along a length of flexible, substantially non-resilient tubing providing 25 walls of the packages comprises tubular guide means having a flared entrance funnel with a rim at its wide end and arranged to receive a pack of said flexible tubing located about the guide means to enable one end of the tubing in the gathered pack to be drawn away from an 30 end of the gathered pack over the said rim, over the convergant area of the flared inside surface of the funnel and through the further length of the tubular guide means so that the outer surface of the flexible material in the pack becomes the cylindrical inner 35 surface of the flexible material passing through the tubular guide means, the said one end of the flexible

of the flexible tubing being sealed to form the base of a first package having the flexible tubing as its side wall, the apparatus being arranged for the base to be thrust, as by an object to be packaged, along the tubular 5 guide means while further flexible tubing is drawn from the pack, over the said rim into the tubular guide means providing space for an object to be packaged when located in or beyond the tubular guide means, and means being provided for manually twisting the flexible tubing to the 10 rear of an object to be packaged while being held against axial rotation by means forming part of the apparatus so as to close the package by rotating the flared funnel about its axis and so providing the base for a package for a further object to be inserted through the funnel, 15 the width of the wide end of the funnel being sufficiently great to present an unsoiled layer of the flexible material on the funnel surface for the passage of that further object.

In order that the invention may be clearly 20 understood and readily carried into effect apparatus in accordance therewith will now be described, by way of example, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figure 1 is a sectional elevation of apparatus 25 for packaging a series of objects respectively in individual packages distributed along a length of flexible tubing;

Figure 2 is a sectional elevation of a portion of the apparatus of Figures shown in greater detail;

30 Figure 3 is a plan of a portion of the apparatus of Figure 2;

Figure 4 is a sectional elevation of the apparatus of Figure 3; and

Figure 5 is a diagram of a detail.

35 Referring to Figure 1 is a cylindrical container 1 is formed with an internal flange 2 from which a short

cylinder 3 extends upwards. A pack consisting of a tubular core 4 inside a profusely circumferentially pleated length of flexible tubing 5 is located inside the container 1 with the core 4 supported by the flange 2 and 5 rotatable on the cylinder 3. The core 4 has a flange 6 that supports the pleated tubing which is surrounded by a sleeve 7. An angle section ring 8 is located above the pleated tubing, sufficient clearance from the core 4 being provided to enable the tubing to be drawn upwards 10 from the pack.

To begin using the pack to form a series of packages 9 of objects, the top of the flexible tubing is pulled upwards away from the pack and tied into a knot 10 (Figure 1). This closed end can then form the bottom of 15 a package to be formed along the length of part of the tubing. This is effected by pushing the closed end downwards by means of an object to be packaged through the narrower end 11 of a flared funnel 12 so that it passes between two converging surfaces 13 of spring 20 loaded jaws 14 and forces them apart until this package as yet unclosed reaches position A (Figure 1) where it is gripped by the jaws 14. As this is being done the flexible tubing 5 continues its passage from the pack over the inlet edge 15 of the funnel 12 to present a 25 fresh and hygienic layer of the tubing in the flared part of the funnel.

The funnel 12 is detachably fixed to the top of the core 4 by a taper joint 16. When the object has reached position A the package is closed by twisting the 30 flexible tubing 5 about the funnel axis at 17. This is done by turning the funnel together with the core 4 and other parts of the pack about that axis. This can easily be done by finger and thumb acting on the edge 15 of the funnel. During this action the package at A is prevented 35 from axial rotation by the jaws 14. When the next object is to be packaged it is pushed against the closed end of

the package at A so as to dislodge that package downwards and take its place. This operation can be repeated to provide a series of packages along the length of unbroken tubing 5. These packages can be of varying sizes as 5 shown in Figure 1.

The jaw mechanism will now be described with reference to Figures 2, 3, 4. The jaws 14 consist of two plates bent as shown in Figure 2 to present the converging surfaces 13 leading to vertical (as shown in 10 Figure 2) surfaces 18, each formed with two rows of teeth 19. When the jaws are closed together each row of teeth on one plate is interdigitated with the corresponding row on the opposite plate. The plates are pivotally mounted above pivots 20 on a cylinder 21 detachably mounted 15 inside the pack core 4 by means of catch members 22 engaging beneath the flange 2. Prior to separation, the plates are held in contact with one another respectively by prestressed flat springs 23, each fixed to the cylinder 21 at one end and bearing at the other end 20 against a lug 24 on the associated one of the two plates. When a package is held between the jaws, the stress in each flat spring is further stressed with a useful mechanical advantage such that the spring pressure remains substantially constant.

25 By the aforesaid means a series of connected closed packages can be formed and this can be continued until the pleated tubing 5 is exhausted. However, when it is desired to remove a package that has just been formed or a series of such packages, the package or 30 uppermost package in the series is severed from the remaining tubing. This can be effected by leaving the funnel in situ and using a tool 25 (Figure 5) with a blade structure 26 similar to that shown in the aforesaid patent specification GB 2206094. An annular 35 groove 27 is formed under the edge 15 of the funnel 12. The tool is used to pierce the tubing material in the

groove 27 so that when the funnel is rotated relatively to the tool the tubing is cut all round. If the funnel 12 is omitted from the apparatus ab initio a rotary cutter device as described in GB 2206094 can be used. 5 The teeth 19 on the jaws 14 are shaped so as to inhibit reverse movement of the package without substantially impeding the normal movement in the direction away from the funnel.

The outwardly flared funnel results in 10 substantial reduction of the possibility of cross infection when the apparatus is put to multi-purpose use in, for example, a hospital, creche or nursery. The funnel provides a large entrance for wet soiled diapers or other wet disposable items, fresh virgin tubing 15 material being drawn in to cover the funnel surface as such an item is thrust through the funnel. The rotation of the funnel and pack is easy for a woman with small hands when the tubing is being twisted. The rim of the funnel may be other than circular, such as elliptical.

20 The entire apparatus may be made from plastics material, except for the blade structure 26. Plastics material with sufficient resilience can be used for the flat springs 23. It has been found that when the tubing 5 is made of high density polyethylene the twisted joints 25 17 remain remarkably tight.

CLAIMS:

1. Apparatus for packaging a series of objects respectively in individual packages distributed along a length of flexible, substantially non-resilient tubing 5 providing the walls of the packages, the apparatus comprising tubular guide means arranged to receive a pack of said flexible tubing when formed into a gathered tube located about the guide means to enable one end of the tubing in the gathered pack to be drawn away from an end 10 of the gathered pack and then over an end of the tubular guide means and through the tubular guide means so that the outer surface of the flexible material in the pack becomes the cylindrical inner surface of the flexible material passing through the tubular guide means, the 15 said one end of the flexible tubing being sealed to form the base of a first package having the flexible tubing as its side wall, the apparatus being furnished with resilient clamping means normally substantially closed but contrived to be opened by the thrust of said closed 20 end when containing the object in said closed end of said first package and thereupon to hold said package when the thrust thereon is relaxed, said thrust resulting in further flexible tubing being drawn from the pack over the said end of the tubular guide means providing space 25 for a further object if required, means being provided for manually twisting the flexible tubing beyond said first mentioned object to close said first package while being held against axial rotation by said clamping means and said clamping means being further contrived for said 30 first package to be thrust beyond and clear of said clamping means by thrust applied to said further object.

2. Apparatus according to claim 1, in which said clamping means comprises two jaws which, when closed together, present converging surfaces to be forced apart 35 by the axial thrust of a package inserted between them and further surfaces shaped to hold the package when the

thrust is relaxed, spring means being provided to exert continuous closing action on the jaws.

3. Apparatus according to claim 2, in which the further surfaces are formed with teeth shaped to provide 5 easier passage of the package away from the converging surfaces than in the opposite direction.

4. Apparatus according of Claim 3, in which the teeth on each jaw are located in rows that are interdigitated with the teeth on the opposite jaw when 10 the jaws are close together.

5. Apparatus according to any one of claims 2 to 4, in which the jaws are pivoted respectively on separate axes close to the separated ends of the convergent surfaces and are respectively loaded by flat springs, 15 each mounted to act on one associated jaw close to its pivotal axis and fixed at a point in the vicinity of the remote end of the associated further surface.

6. Apparatus according to any one of the preceding claims, in which the end of the tubular guide means over 20 which the end of the flexible tubing is to be drawn is constituted by a flared funnel having a rim at its wide end so that the flexible material will flow along a converging frustoconical surface as an object is being thrust towards the clamping means so as to present an 25 unsmeared conical layer of the flexible material on the frustoconical surface.

7. Apparatus according to claim 6, in which the funnel is arranged to be detachably fixed to the remainder of the tubular guide means.

30 8. Apparatus for packaging a series of objects substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings.

9. Apparatus for packaging a series of objects respectively in individual packages distributed along a 35 length of flexible, substantially non-resilient tubing providing the walls of the packages, the apparatus

comprising tubular guide means having a flared entrance funnel with a rim at its wide end and arranged to receive a pack of said flexible tubing located about the guide means to enable one end of the tubing in the gathered 5 pack to be drawn away from an end of the gathered pack over the said rim, over the convergant area of the flared inside surface of the funnel and through the further length of the tubular guide means so that the outer surface of the flexible material in the pack becomes the 10 cylindrical inner surface of the flexible material passing through the tubular guide means, the said one end of the flexible tubing being sealed to form the base of a first package having the flexible tubing as its side wall, the apparatus being arranged for the base to be 15 thrust, as by an object to be packaged, along the tubular guide means while further flexible tubing is drawn from the pack, over the said rim into the tubular guide means providing space for an object to be packaged when located in or beyond the tubular guide means, and means being 20 provided for manually twisting the flexible tubing to the rear of an object to be packaged while being held against axial rotation by means forming part of the apparatus so as to close the package by rotating the flared funnel about its axis and so providing the base for a package 25 for a further object to be inserted through the funnel, the width of the wide end of the funnel being sufficiently great to present an unsoiled layer of the flexible material on the funnel surface for the passage of that further object.

30 10. Apparatus according to Claim 9, in which the funnel is detachably fixed to the said further length of the tubular guide means.

11. Apparatus according to claim 9 or claim 10, in which the rim of the funnel is formed with an undercut 35 groove to enable a tool to pierce the flexible material when extending over the rim and cut the material all

round when the funnel is manually rotated relatively to the tool to enable such package or packages that have already been formed to be removed from the apparatus.

Amendments to the claims have been filed as follows

CLAIMS:

1. Apparatus for packaging a series of objects respectively in individual packages distributed along a length of flexible, substantially non-resilient tubing 5 providing the walls of the packages, comprising tubular guide means having an entrance funnel with a rim at its inlet end and arranged to receive a gathered pack of said flexible tubing when located about said guide means to enable one end of the tubing in the gathered pack to be 10 drawn away from an end of the gathered pack over said rim over the inside surface of said funnel and through a further length of said tubular guide means so that the outer surface of the flexible material in said pack becomes the cylindrical inner surface of the flexible 15 material passing through said tubular guide means, the said one end of the flexible tubing having been sealed to form the base of a first package having the flexible tubing as its side wall, the apparatus being arranged for the base to be thrust, as by an object to be packaged, 20 along said tubular guide means while further flexible tubing is drawn from the pack, over said rim into said tubular guide means providing space for an object to be packaged when located in or beyond said tubular guide means, and means being provided for holding an object to 25 be packaged against rotation about its axis while the flexible tubing to the rear of that object is manually twisted to close the package, characterised by the feature that said funnel is flared outwards to said rim so that said flexible tubing drawn over said rim passes 30 over a convergent area of the flared inside surface of said funnel and the funnel is mounted for axial rotation by manual application to said rim to twist said flexible material when required to close a package, the width of said funnel at said rim being sufficiently great to 35 present an unsoiled layer of the flexible material on the funnel surface.

2. Apparatus according to Claim 1, characterised in that said flared, rotatable funnel is detachably mounted with respect to said further length of said tubular guide means.

5 3. Apparatus according to Claim 1 or Claim 2, characterised in that said rim of said funnel is formed with an undercut groove to enable a tool to pierce the flexible material when extending over the rim and thereupon to cut the material all round when the funnel 10 is rotated relatively to the tool to enable such package or packages that have already been formed to be removed from the apparatus.

4. Apparatus according to any one of the preceding claims, characterised in that it is furnished with 15 resilient clamping means normally substantially closed but contrived to be opened to provide said means for holding an object against rotation about its axis after being thrust into said clamping means and thereupon to hold that object when the thrust thereon is relaxed, said 20 clamping means being further contrived for an object when held thereby to be thrust beyond and clear of said clamping means when thrust by force exerted through a further object to be held by said means.

5. Apparatus according to Claim 4, characterised in 25 that said clamping means comprises two jaws which, when closed together, present converging surfaces to be forced apart by the axial thrust of an object inserted between them and further surfaces shaped to hold the object when the thrust is relaxed, spring means being provided to 30 exert continuous closing action on the jaws.

6. Apparatus according to Claim 5, characterised in that said further surfaces are formed with teeth shaped to provide easier passage of the object in a direction away from said converging surfaces than in the opposite 35 direction.

7. Apparatus according to Claim 6, characterised in

that the teeth on each jaw are located in rows that are inter-digitated with teeth on the opposite jaw when the jaws are close together.

8. Apparatus according to any one of Claims 5 to 5 7, characterised in that the jaws are pivoted respectively on separate axes close to the separated ends of said converging surfaces and are respectively loaded by flat springs, each mounted to act on one associated jaw close to its pivotal axis and fixed at a 10 point in the vicinity of the remote end of the associated further surface.

8. Apparatus for packaging a series of objects substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings.

Patents Act 1977**Examiner's report to the Comptroller under Section 17 -15-
(The Search report)**

Application number GB 9417373.9

Relevant Technical Fields

(i) UK Cl (Ed.M) A4A (AE), B8C (CW21)
(ii) Int Cl (Ed.5) B65B 9/10, 9/15, 9/18; B65F 1/06

Search Examiner STEPHEN SMITH

Databases (see below)

(i) UK Patent Office collections of GB, EP, WO and US patent specifications.
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Date of completion of Search 13 OCTOBER 1994

(ii) ONLINE DATABASES: WPI

Documents considered relevant following a search in respect of Claims :- 1 TO 7
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Categories of documents

X: Document indicating lack of novelty or of inventive step.	P: Document published on or after the declared priority date but before the filing date of the present application.
Y: Document indicating lack of inventive step if combined with one or more other documents of the same category.	E: Patent document published on or after, but with priority date earlier than, the filing date of the present application.
A: Document indicating technological background and/or state of the art.	&: Member of the same patent family; corresponding document.

Category	Identity of document and relevant passages	Relevant to claim(s)
Y	GB 2206094 A (PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS) see whole document	1
Y	GB 1265328 (COUPER) see especially lines 32 to 87 of page 2	1

Databases: The UK Patent Office database comprises classified collections of GB, EP, WO and US patent specifications as outlined periodically in the Official Journal (Patents). The on-line databases considered for search are also listed periodically in the Official Journal (Patents).



Application No: GB 9417373.9
Claims searched: 1-9

Examiner: Stephen Smith
Date of search: 23 October 1995

Patents Act 1977
Further Search Report under Section 17

Databases searched:

UK Patent Office collections, including GB, EP, WO & US patent specifications, in:

UK Cl (Ed.N): A4A(AE), B8C(CW21)

Int Cl (Ed.6): B65B 9/10, 9/15, 9/18; B65F 1/06

Other: ONLINE:WPI

Documents considered to be relevant:

Category	Identity of document and relevant passage	Relevant to claims
A	GB2206094A (PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS)	

X	Document indicating lack of novelty or inventive step	A	Document indicating technological background and/or state of the art.
Y	Document indicating lack of inventive step if combined with one or more other documents of same category.	P	Document published on or after the declared priority date but before the filing date of this invention.
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